

# The Ballarat Naturalist

August 2017



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## Lal Lal and Moorabool Falls Excursion

Sunday 9 July 2017

**Leader: Les Hanrahan**

A group of 13 gathered in bright sunshine at Lal Lal falls. We sought shelter from the cold wind behind water tanks. Les explained the geology of the area.

The underlying rock is granite exposed in some areas where the Lal Lal Creek and Moorabool River have eroded through the basalt. The nearby kaolin mine quarried into the decomposed granite to obtain the white clay. The Lal Lal and Moorabool Falls have been formed when the streams eroded through basalt flows from eruption points to the north. At Lal Lal Falls there are 2 separate lava flows with a thickness of 35m. The basalt cooled slowly developing columnar jointing.

We viewed the falls from a platform built after a fatal rock fall led to the closure of the path to the foot of the falls. Returning to the cars we walked through the edge of grassland dominated by Kangaroo Grass. We found 2 dark masses of fungi 50cm wide and 25cm high growing around grass stems. These were probably mature specimens of an exotic Dyer's Conk *Phaeolus schweinitzii* which were growing from the roots of the felled pine trees. Tree Violet and Spiny Bursaria were growing nearby.

A few of the group were members of FNCB when the club was involved with the anchor plant project in the late 1980's. We visited the enclosed area alongside Lal Lal Creek where one of a few remnant populations of Australian Anchor Plant *Discaria pubescens* in western Victoria were located.



Field Nats  
at Anchor  
plant site,  
Lal Lal  
Creek

Seed was collected, grown and replanted here and also at Chepstowe and Clunes. The plants have grown well and seed capsules were seen on some plants.



Our last stop for the afternoon was further along Harris Road where we walked into Moorabool Falls. Narrow-leaf Peppermint, and Manna Gum and Messmate were growing along Salt Creek, with Swamp Gum on the higher flat ground. Moorabool Falls tumble down 27 metres in a single drop over basalt that cooled in large blocks. Thanks to Les for leading the excursion and to Fran for researching the geological history. John Gregurke  
Images by John G, Val Hocking & Carol Hall ( above)

### **July meeting—Western Australia in Spring 2017**

#### **Presentations by 5 club members**

Val Hocking spoke on the pre and post tours that had been organised around the Perth ANN get together. We travelled north taking in various forest reserves and granite outcrops which frequently had large varieties and masses of wild flowers. These included the yellow and orange or pink Waitzias. We returned via the coastal heathlands of Lesueur NP and the Pinnacles. Excellent booklets had been prepared for all our journeys including diary notes, field notes, bird & plant lists.

The southern tour took in the rocky coastlines of Albany through to Walpole and Nornalup inlets, a day in the Stirling Ranges returning via the tall timber country and some coastal whale watching.

Elephant Rocks  
Williams Bay NP



## Hi Vallee Farm



John Gregurke spoke about Hi Vallee Farm 250 km north of Perth. Don and Joy Williams have kept 400 hectares of natural Kwangan Heathland as a nature reserve. There are over 500 species of plants found in the area. A book *Field Guide to Hi Vallee Farm* has been published which has images of all the plants and is very useful to identify the plants.

### Hairy Lechenaultia *Lechenaultia hirsuta*

In October 2016 about 100 people from all around Australia attended the Australian Naturalists' Network Get-Together in Perth. Accommodation was provided at the Woodsman Point Recreation Camp near Fremantle. We were treated to a wide range of talks and excursions around Perth. We went on excursions from the coast in the Quindalup Dunes on the Swan Coastal Plain, up the Darling Scarp to the John Forrest National Park to the Mundaring Weir and Hovea Falls, and one day to Toodyay on the plateau 85kms north-east of Perth. Other excursions were to Kings Park and Wireless Hill in Perth.

Western Australia is one of the richest flora regions of the world, and a lot of the plant species we saw occur only in WA. The large White Spider Orchid *Caladenia longicauda*, the red and green Kangaroo Paw *Anigozanthus manglesii* and the bright Flame Pea *Chlorizema rhombeum* were just a few of the beautiful flowers seen. On our excursion to Rottnest Island we saw many Quokkas as well as the large 200mm long King's Skink and the venomous Dugite snake. At the Shipwreck Museum in Fremantle, part of the wrecked *Batavia* ship was on display.

Les Hanrahan



Quokkas, Rottnest Island

While other club members attended the ANN in Perth including pre-and-post tours, I undertook a 3-week dedicated wildflower trip with International Park Tours around the south-west, including time in Fitzgerald River National Park. This is a UNESCO Biosphere reserve of 300,000ha.

Geologically the region includes the remains of a 1-billion year old mountain range created when continental crust south of what is now WA crashed into the Esperance-Albany area. These highly resistant sandstones and quartzites form West and East Mt Barren. The flat land around them consists of much younger sandy marine sediments which have been thoroughly leached over the last 50 million years, resulting in nutrient-poor soils which have given rise to the incredible biodiversity characterising the park. I chose images of flora which had impressed me such as the spectacular tall *Hakea victoria* with its bright red and yellow upper leaves, two of many *Stylidium* species, *Petrophile* and *Isopogon* species, and fauna typical of the area such as the Honey Possum, Bob-tailed Lizard and Mallee Fowl. A photo-book which I created of the whole trip was available for perusal.

Carol Hall

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**A working bee** to plant trees in Woowookarung Regional Park is being organised by Friends of Canadian Corridor. 10am to 12 noon on **Sunday 13 August**. Meet along the northern end of Dozed Track.

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### **Orchiding Field Trip to Enfield State Forest/Park with Australasian Native Orchid Society.**

On **Sunday August 13**, Emily is leading a field trip for the Australasian Native Orchid Society's Victorian Group, looking for bird orchids, greenhoods, helmet orchids and gnat orchids in Enfield Forest. You are most welcome to join us! Leaving from Napoleons recreation reserve at 10 am. Please let her know if you are planning to come along so she can let you know if any plans change.

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**Anglesea Wildflower Weekend** and Art Show, to be hosted by ANGAIR on **September 23-24, 2017**.

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### **Excerpts from the Club Meeting Minutes July 7, 2017**

#### **Opening and Apologies**

Attendance: President John Gregurke welcomed fourteen members.

Apol: D and EThurgood, Sakers, D and S Horwood, A and Indra Bone, L Sommerlad, P Noble, M Sorrell, C & ABaulch, G Binns, K Hammond, B Murphy, P and C Dalman, M Moravec, F Hanrahan, B and K Elder and H Young-Harvey.

### **Business Arising from Previous Club Meeting:**

John P, Margaret R, John G., Roger T., Emily N formed a sub-committee to produce a submission regarding the Club's aspirations for Woowookarung (Canadian) Regional Park for consideration in the Management Plan that is currently being developed. John G. submitted it to Parks Victoria this week.

"Poster" detailing FNCB's vegetation monitoring project at Woowookarung RP was displayed at Biodiversity Across the Borders Conference on June 9 and generated plenty of interest. Parks Vic, Fed Uni and FoCC have all expressed interest in borrowing it for display.

Two hundred dollars was donated to Trust for Nature's Ned's Corner Station appeal.

John G. and Andy A. attended training session on Parks Victoria's new ParkConnect website. "Woowookarung", July 19.

### **Business Arising from Correspondence:**

Any nominations for an individual or group that have made an extraordinary voluntary contribution to protecting the environment in Australia- for an ACF award? No.

Renew Club membership and insurance through The Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria. Carol Hall moved that FNCB renew its membership. Seconded: John Petheram. Carried.

### **Reports:**

Treasurer's Report: Opening bal: \$8,243.91; Income \$180  
Expenses \$301.88 Closing bal: \$8,122.03 Moved: Les  
Hanrahan Seconded: John Morrish Carried.

Friends of Canadian Corridor Forum: Well-attended again. Great historical overview of the Park by Jeff Rootes, and an encouraging presentation by the Parks Vic Regional Manager Tony English who stressed that PV manage their reserves for

natural values first and foremost. Chris Sawyer from “Site Office” has been digging up interesting information and maps too, going back to 1933. One example is the statistic that Katy Ryans Road was once nine drays wide!

Wider Geelong Flora Lecture: Orchids: 25-30 Members of Geelong FNC, Castlemaine FNC, Growing friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens and Bellarine Landcare Group attended & asked great questions.

Biodiversity Across the Borders conference: 500-600 people attended, including 6 members of FNCB. Some very interesting presentations, but many were less practically oriented than in other years. Penny Greenslade’s talk was a highlight, pointing out that the term “biodiversity offsets” was a misnomer because it doesn’t consider invertebrates, which represent over 95% of diversity.

Listening for Nature project, Wombat Forest: The four song meters have been deployed for three weeks in the north, south and west of the forest. They will be moved into the east of the forest at the end of July. Trying to deploy the meters away from houses, trails and roads has shown us just how fragmented and dissected the forest is. Great way to learn the diversity of vegetation types.

Training session on Parks Victoria’s ParkConnect website: Andy Arnold and John Gregurke attended a training session about Park Connect with Parks Victoria staff. FNCB have registered as a group. The web site will be used to record the time spent monitoring, seed collection and revegetation work in Canadian Regional Park. Individuals can register as a volunteer at web site [www.parkconnect.vic.gov.au](http://www.parkconnect.vic.gov.au). Registration makes signing up for working bees a simpler process

## **General Business**

Submissions for the Fire Operations Plans for the Midlands region and the VEAC Central West Investigation are open until mid-August and members are encouraged to make submissions that advocate for environmental values to be thoroughly considered.



**Excursion: The 6th August Field Trip** will involve members in a survey/ count of the critically endangered Spiny Rice-flower growing in the basalt western plains grassland at Skipton Native Grassland Reserve managed by Ballarat Environment Network. A major conservation project focusing on this plant is being funded by Trust for Nature through the Pimelea Conservation Trust Fund

### **Show & Tell / Field Reports**

Andy sighted a Great Egret wading and feeding in the middle basin at North Gardens Wetlands; Masked Lapwings sitting on eggs for over 3 weeks at 10 Allura Drive and an Australasian Grebe diving and fishing in waterway opposite 5<sup>th</sup> green on Ballarat Golf Course, Insignia Blvd.

John P found the Emu Feather Fern (Mother Shield Fern) at Mt Warrenheip. The Aboriginal term for this fern is where Mt Warrenheip got its name. He also found that Earth Stars were common on the lower slopes of the east side, along with bad invasions of the weeds Forget-me-not & Elderberry.

Les reported an Antechinus near the track to Lake Elizabeth. John Mildren reported a Swan with six cygnets at Lake Wendouree and a delightful close encounter with a ring-tail possum in his backyard at Eyre Street.

Emily has found Striated Greenhoods flowering well at a couple of sites in Dereel, where Trim Greenhoods, Tall Greenhoods and Dwarf Greenhoods are budding. Veined Helmet orchids are budding and Emerald-lip Greenhoods have just started to flower at her block in Scarsdale, and a pair of Fan-tailed Cuckoos have been calling to each other throughout the day. Thurgoods emailed -Along the Nullarbor part of the Connie Sue Tk, Australasian pipits frequently preceded us on the track. We put up 3 lots of bustards, 11 in total. A huge flock of budgerigars freewheeling and glinting green in each turn was a highlight.

**Syllabus Item:** Val Hocking, John Gregurke and Les Hanrahan presented great reports on the 2016 Australian Naturalists' Network Get-together: Perth, and John Mildren and Carol Hall showed us beautiful photos of the lovely flora they encountered on their respective 2016 Spring trips in south (west) Western Australia.

# CALENDAR 2017

## August

- Fri 4      *Birds of Creswick - past and present:* Ian Ashton,  
Birdlife Ballarat member
- Sun 6      *Skipton Native Grassland Reserve & Linton Block:*  
Emily Noble, Club member
- Tues 22      Committee meeting at Fran's 7.30 pm

## September

- Fri 1      *Native plants in the Melton Botanic Gardens*  
David and Barbara Pye
- Sat 2      Melton Botanic Gardens + nearby geological reserve
- Tues 26      Committee meeting

## Committee

President	John Gregurke	
Vice Pres	Fran Hanrahan	
Secretary	Emily Noble	
Treasurer	Les Hanrahan	
Andy Arnold		Val Hocking
Bill Elder		John Mildren

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                    John Petheram

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**Meetings** are held at the Primary Industries Training Centre, cnr of Gillies and Gregory Sts, on the first Friday of the month at 7.30pm..

**Excursions:** Leave from the carpark at the Primary Industries Training Centre, cnr Gillies and Gregory Sts. at 9.30 am, unless otherwise advised.

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